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LONDON GOSSIP.

Two Cardinals—Gladstone and Wales— A Ruskinesque Criticism.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

LONDON, June 5, 1883. There are no two living Englishmen who can boast a wider fame or a higher social distinction in this great Protestant land than those two converts—or perverts, as you will—to the Roman church, Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning. Yet, similar as their careers are in a certain sense, the men are utterly dissimilar. I should like to know how they regard one another. In a perfectly fraternal spirit, think you? I doubt it.

Cardinal Newman is at this moment in London, and he is staying with Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, who so recently pronounced his sympathy with the atheists Foote and Ramsay, now suffering in Holway prison for their caricatures of sacred themes. The cardinal is known to be in favor of the affirmation bill, and his friendship with Mr. Gladstone still survives.

Cardinal Manning regards with holy horror Bradlaugh and all his works, and to him the abolition of the parliamentary oath would be the beginning of the downfall of the Christian realm of England. Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

If it, therefore, be true that Cardinal Newman studiously avoids the cardinal archbishop of Westminster, and does not even go near the oratory of Brompton, with which his name in the past was so intimately associated, but prefers the heretical society of Lord Coleridge, Mr. Gladstone and Dean Church, surely there must be a lack of mutual love and esteem among the hierarchy of the one true church.

It is well known that Gladstone's esteem for Newman is simply unbounded. His subtle casuistry, no less than his perfect literary style, must have an overpowering effect on a statesman who, with certain English qualities—perhaps I should say Scotch qualities—promises an ingenuity of mental resource and a delight in problematical difficulties that make him more like an Italian diplomatist of the middle ages than an English leader of our time.

A CLASSIC "FREAK."

The ladies, especially of Boston, may be especially interested in the series of classical dramatic performances at Lady Freake's, Kensington. This was given in the private theatre where Mrs. Langtry first learned to fret and strut her little hour upon the stage. The "Story of Troy" was enacted, and on certain evenings in Greek. Mr. Gladstone was among the audience on the first "Greek" night; and the sweet, æsthetic youths and maidens became possessed with a sudden fear when they beheld the stern features of the "Grave Old Man" who had informed the hostess that he "trusted due regard would be paid to the quantities of the classic verse." Mr. Gladstone expressed himself, on the whole, as well pleased. Not so the Prince of Wales, who put in an appearance at one of the early rehearsals, but never came again, giving as his reason that the "Kensington belles" were not good looking enough. With Kit Marlowe, he might have exclaimed—only in derision:

"Is this the face that wrecked a thousand ships
And burned the topmost towers of Ilium?"

On the following evening the performance was in English, and among the audience I noticed Browning and Ruskin. Oscar Wilde, too, was there with his locks pruned. He says that the statue of Nero, with its cropped hair, determined him to sacrifice the æsthetic redundancy of his wavy curls, because it was "the statue of the wickedest men, modelled by the greatest sculptor." Poor Oscar! He may be weak, but he is not wicked, and it is too bad of him to cast ridicule on a really stupendous ruffian by such puerile imitation.

MR. RUSKIN

is lecturing this afternoon in Mrs. Bishop's drawing-room, also at Kensington, before a very select audience. His subject is "Francesca's Book," but one can never tell by the title what he means to discourse on. I was much struck by Ruskin's recent criticism of Alma Tadema, which the artists in the Hub may like to hear. I can truthfully say that it expresses my own opinion of the true value of this fashionable painter exactly: "There is a universal tendency in all his figures to looting attitudes of fear or business. * * Not that Mr. Alma Tadema is personally to blame; he only reflects the disfigurement and disgrace of the 19th century, with its vast vortex of revolutionary rage against priesthood and knighthood, and all else that resists the license of mankind." In saying that I agree with this criticism of Alma Tadema, I do not mean that I accept the Ruskinesque dislike for the 19th century and its ways. Of the centuries it may be truly said that "distance lends enchantment to the view," but I certainly think that certain of the arts—painting being one—by no means give adequate expression to the higher aspirations and emotions of the nobler men and women of our time, and that, therefore, on pictorial art is inferior to that of the "old masters," whether they be Italian or Flemish.